

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of exchanging information via an annotation, comprising:
 - providing a[[n]] first interface allowing a first user to view query results including a first data object, select the first data object from the query results, and create an annotation with a scope encompassing the selected first data object, whereby the annotation annotates the selected first data object with metadata describing the selected first data object, and wherein the first user is authorized to view the first data object;
 - providing an interface element allowing the first user to further associate the annotation with a second data object, whereby the annotation annotates both the first data object and the second data object, and wherein the first user is not authorized to view the second data object;
 - providing a[[n]] second interface allowing a second user to view query results including the second data object, wherein the second user is authorized to view the second data object; and
 - providing, in the second interface, an indication of the annotation to the second user.
2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein providing an interface element allowing the first user to further associate the annotation with a second data object comprises providing an interface element allowing the user to associate the annotation with a primary key for a row of data containing the selected first data object.
3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein providing a[[n]] first interface allowing a first user to view query results and create an annotation with a scope related to the selected first data object comprises:

providing a[[n]] selection interface allowing the first user to select one or more rows, columns, or cells of the query results; and

providing an annotation interface allowing the first user to create an annotation for the selected one or more rows, columns, or cells.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein:

providing an interface element allowing the first user to further associate the annotation with a second data object comprises allowing the first user to associate the annotation with a model entity encompassing the selected first data object the first user is authorized to view as well as the second data object the first user is not authorized to view; and

the method further comprises storing the annotation with a reference to the model entity.

5–19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) A tangible computer-readable storage medium containing a program for exchanging information via annotations which, when executed by a processor, performs operations comprising:

providing a[[n]] first interface allowing a first user to view query results, select a first data object from the query results, and create an annotation with a scope encompassing selected first data object, whereby the annotation annotates the selected first data object with metadata describing the selected data object, and wherein the first user is authorized to view the first data object;

providing an interface element allowing the first user to further associate the annotation with a second data object, whereby the annotation annotates both the selected first data object and the second data object, and wherein the first user is not authorized to view the second data object;

providing a[[n]] second interface allowing a second user to view second query results including the second data object, wherein the second user is authorized to view the second data object; and

providing, in the second interface, an indication of the annotation to the second user.

21. (Previously Presented) The tangible computer-readable storage medium of claim 20, wherein providing an interface element allowing the first user to further associate the annotation with a second data object comprises providing an interface element allowing the first user to associate the annotation with a primary key for a row of data containing the selected first data object.

22. (Previously Presented) The tangible computer-readable storage medium of claim 21, wherein:

providing an interface element allowing the first user to further associate the annotation with a second data object comprises allowing the first user to associate the annotation with an entity encompassing the selected first data object and the second data object that the first user is not authorized to view; and

the method further comprises storing the annotation with a reference to the entity.

23. (Previously Presented) The tangible computer-readable storage medium of claim 22, wherein:

allowing the first user to associate the annotation with an entity comprises presenting the first user with one or more entities encompassing the selected first data object and the second data object that the first user is not authorized to view; and

the method further comprises storing the annotation with a reference to at least one of the one or more entities selected by the user.

24. (Previously Presented) The tangible computer-readable storage medium of claim 20, wherein the selected first data object is an instance value of a field encompassed by an entity.

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Previously Presented) The tangible computer-readable storage medium of claim 20, wherein the second query results do not contain the selected first data object described by the annotation.

27. (Previously Presented) The tangible computer-readable storage medium of claim 20, wherein the operations further comprise, in response to input from the second user, displaying the annotation to the second user.

28. (Previously Presented) The tangible computer-readable storage medium of claim 27, wherein the operations further comprise displaying, to the second user, the selected first data object described by the annotation.

29–38. (Cancelled)